

# 2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

## DANVILLE PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce represents more than 560 businesses employing approximately 22,000 people in the Dan River Region. The Chamber is the premier advocate for business and industry in the region and projects a unified voice on key issues that affect the business community.

Our Chamber believes that the success for both our region and the Commonwealth depends on investments and priorities that stimulate and advance economic growth and prosperity for businesses **of all sizes**. The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests our legislators support the following priorities:

### **Business Climate and Economic Development**

- Maintain Virginia's current business climate and defend Right-to-Work, **as this is a key to attracting and retaining industries and small businesses in the Commonwealth.**
- Ensure rural broadband access, recognizing that **it is an imperative for equitable opportunities related to economic development, telework, telemedicine, entrepreneurship, and education.**
- Reduce the disparate impact that minimum wage increases have on small businesses by encouraging and sharing innovative wage and benefit models that exist across the state for employees. **Promote differing wage increases based on geographic and economic disparities.**
- Support economic development initiatives that improve site readiness and create jobs.
- Improve access to funding and remove barriers that impede small business growth and entrepreneurship.
- **Prevent the erosion of the mission and the composition of the Tobacco Commission** and ensure that the Commission provides funding for economic development opportunities only to those projects located in the original tobacco region footprint.
- Support the continued development and marketing of large-scale industrial parks, **including, but not limited to the Southern Virginia Megasite at Berry Hill**, which serves multiple jurisdictions and fosters enhanced collaboration within a region.

### **Education and Workforce Development**

- Invest in improvements to our education system to prepare and support a well-trained workforce.
- Advocate for initiatives that strengthen pathways to the teaching profession and improve teacher attraction and retention.
- Address the cost and availability of childcare and early childhood education to support our workforce.
- Continued support for the **Virginia Jobs Investment Program** which helps offset recruitment and training costs for businesses of all sizes in the Commonwealth.
- Support increased funding for the **Virginia Talent Accelerator Program** which rapidly re-skills an area's workforce.
- Continued support of FastForward, G3, the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) and the Growth4VA plan, which also has a significant talent component through more experiential learning opportunities, such as support for more internships and apprenticeships.

### Transportation

- Support for transportation improvements including, but not limited to, upgrading Route 29 to interstate status and **finalizing US Highway 58 as a four-lane highway.**
- Support policies to invest in infrastructure and ensure effective spending of funding to enhance the state's competitiveness.

### Housing

- Promote policies that increase the housing supply and address the affordability and quality of housing options for all Virginians, including our military families and veterans.
- Develop targeted strategies to lessen disparities in homeownership.

### Healthcare

- Advocate for services and supports that address the mental and behavioral needs of Virginians.
- Invest in best practice models and programs to address critical workforce shortage areas, while developing ongoing strategies and data systems to address future workforce needs.

